



The Bethel Courier.

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Fall 1986

Bethel Historical Society

REFLECTIONS ON THE NORTHWEST BETHEL ROAD

By Rev. Elwin L. Wilson

Editor's Note: The following is an abridged account by Society member Rev. Elwin L. Wilson of Orono, who was born and raised in Bethel in the early years of this century. He is married to the well-known writer Dorothy Clark Wilson.

Take a walk with me as a boy up the north side of the Androscoggin River. To get to our starting point from the village we take the Rumford road until we cross the long covered bridge. Then, instead of going straight ahead into Mayville we turn left by the eastern edge of "Professor" Chapman's lawn.

William R. Chapman may be at home or in some distant city giving a piano recital or planning for one of his widely-known concerts. This is the former Ryerson farm, stretching for some distance up and down the river although the "Professor" was known to be a better musician than farmer. "Dimple," his rather unusual daughter, acted as overseer to the farm hands when he was away. It was local gossip that she could "swear with the best of them."

The "Professor" had a proud bearing and a distinguished goatee which was adding to his dignity by turning gray. And he was the proud owner of one of the first automobiles in the town. My sister Minnie was returning from the village one day with horse and buggy when she met him in his car at a narrow place in the road near the "sand hill," as we called it. Horses were normally quite frightened of cars in those days and her "Queen Bess" was no exception. As the horse snorted and pressed over to the side of the road as the "Professor" drove slowly by, he kept calling out above the noise of the motor, "Whoa thar, Whoa thar, Whoa thar." Minnie laughingly told us about the incident when she got home and said that she thought that the "Professor" had frightened the horse more than his car did.

Leaving the somewhat ostentatious Chapman buildings behind we see a horse-racing track on our right in the edge of a wooded section. The area was formerly used for the Bethel Agricultural Fair and we always referred to it as "The Fair Grounds"; we can see a few small shed-like buildings where the farmers and craftsmen and women used to display their products during the fairs. The fair was in its decline when I was a small boy but I well remember seeing men, including the "Professor," training their horses on the track.

Having passed the fair grounds we soon come to Riverside cemetery, bounded on one side by the Androscoggin River and on the opposite side by our roadway. The house just beyond the cemetery is occupied by Asa Stowell, whose son Forrest was once in my Sunday School.

Passing through a wooded section we come to a comparatively large set of farm buildings on our right, the home of the



The old red school house, Northwest Bethel Road, 1975.

Charles Valentine family. While farming in a small way Mr. Valentine, as we always called him, was our first mailman. Our Rural Free Delivery route was established when I was old enough so that I remember the arrival of the mailbox and father setting it on a post by the road. Mr. Valentine used to come around with horse and buggy (or sleigh). I remember that the buggy had curtains at the front and sides on rainy days.

The Valentine buildings burned when I was still quite young. That day Mother had taken some of us children with her to visit the Orrin Ellingwoods who lived high up on a hill west of our farm and we watched the billowing smoke from the fire. At that distance we could see only towers of black and white smoke in the distance. Mr. Ellingwood thought that the black smoke was in one location and the white in another. There being no telephones in our neighborhood that day, we had no way of getting any details immediately.

It may seem odd to find me referring to our neighbors as Mister. As children and youth our parents never allowed us to refer to men by their first names, as is so common today. They thought it did not show enough respect to the older generation. So in some cases I have even forgotten the first names of men I knew then.

A few minute's walk beyond the Valentine homestead, we find the Horatio Upton home sitting on an elevation to our right, quite a large house and barn overlooking the intervalle across our road towards the river. This was later occupied by the Harry King family.

When Mr. Upton owned the property, father used to cut ice sometimes on a pond near the river. I believe that he cut ice for our icehouse and sometimes for use at the Uptons. One day he nearly lost his life while doing that. The ice was cut in cakes with a hand ice saw, usually fourteen inches square or

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commonly twice that size, or 14 x 28 inches. A normal depth of ice for cutting was from eight to twelve inches. On this very cold day it had started to snow and father, just before starting home, was setting up some stakes at the corner of the open water so that he could tell later where the ice might be too thin to walk on. The horse and sleigh were standing nearby, the horse tethered and blanketed for warmth. As father had slipped on his overcoat and was setting the stakes he accidentally stepped on one of the double cakes of ice which he had left floating in a corner - probably the last one he had sawed off and forgotten about. The cake of course was pushed downward with his pressure and it was only as he gave it a hard kick downward that he could roll back onto the ice. Being a light and very energetic man, he managed to roll onto the ice after going into the water far enough to "get his shirttail wet" as he expressed it. I still shudder to think how close he was to death, and how his escape seemed almost miraculous.

Let us pursue our way for nearly a mile through woodlands until we come down "Sand hill" into the Chapman Brook valley. As we come into the open fields there are Bessey and Bald mountains almost directly ahead. But we turn left toward the brook and pass the homestead long ago occupied by one of the several Chapmans of this area. Rob Enman and family lived there when I was small, and I used to walk to school with his son Lester, who was about my age. Rob had what he called a "horse power," treadmill for a horse which turned machinery to saw logs. He brought it to our home on at least one occasion to saw wood used for heat in the cold days of the year. I was fooling around nearby once with a peavey and he called out to me, "Don't break the cant-dog handle." I could barely lift the heavy tool!

When I was in my teens the Skillings family occupied that farm. Herman Skillings came there from Massachusetts and we soon got quite intimate with the children: Albert, a little older than I, Joan, near Myrtle's age, and Marion, a few years younger. We had many good times together and got into difficulties sometimes with our pranks.

Leaving the Skillings farm we immediately cross the wooden bridge across Chapman Brook, which furnishes its water to the village. The clear sweet water is piped from a dam in the foothills of Bald Mountain, a quarter mile or so upstream from the bridge we are crossing. The brook is a trout stream and I have spent happy hours with a hazel sapling for a rod with cheap line and hook attached trying to lure a trout to take the wriggling worm. A few did, on occasion. Father allowed me to fish beside our fields when he was working nearby, when I was too young to be doing farm work.

From the bridge we can see ahead, and to our right, an old red schoolhouse, which has never been used within my

memory for anything other than the storage of farm tools and equipment. It belonged to my family until my brother Evans finally sold the farm. The new schoolhouse was a half mile farther along the road.

Opposite the schoolhouse was a stone-walled cellar hole, left from years gone by when some dwelling evidently had stood there. The cellar served us as a good dumping ground for some of my family's discarded metal cans and bottles. In later years the home of my sister Myrtle and her husband, Leslie Lapham, was built on this lot. It was an attractive lot, looking out from its elevation over the three sections of fields to the juncture of Chapman Brook and the Androscoggin River.

And now we come to what would normally be the destination of our walk, the Wilson homesteads. On our left the "Old House" where my grandfather and grandmother, Hiram H. and Mary Oliver Wilson, had lived, as well as my parents until after my older sister Minnie was born. I was intrigued particularly about two things - the cold spring, always well-filled with water, in the bottom of the stone-walled basement, and the big bricked-in arch kettle in the entrance-way outside the kitchen, with its long-handled iron shovel with which I, in later years, stirred vegetables which were cooking for the hogs.

On the elevation lot opposite is my home, purchased by my father from the previous Chapman owners, before I was born. The Chapman farm and the Wilson farm had lots on both sides of the road, somewhat intermingled, and I think that the two families were not very congenial, so Father, assisted by a loan from his brother Virgil, was able to arrange the purchase. It is a two-story house and an ell of one story, with terraced lawn in front bounded by a split-stone wall and outlined in maple trees. There is a barn across the driveway at the right with the ice-house beyond it. The wide doors in the ell of the house suggest a carriage house and a woodshed, though both were used for storing wood as I knew them.

But, for now, let us continue up the road. We go up a steep hill (later graded down considerably), across a level high ground, then down a hill into the Lane Brook valley. Before we cross the bridge over the little stream we pass the Lane home on the right. Roscoe and Affie Lane and their son Roy live there. Affie was an unusual name to us, and we named one of our cows "Affie," perhaps because she was purchased from the Lanes.

Leroy was a grown man when I first knew him, rather stocky in build, slow and deliberate in speech and action. He used to work for father occasionally, and father, being a man of energy and action sometimes was irked by Roy's deliberateness. One day Roy was sawing wood for father. He was using a buck-saw with the wood on a saw-horse. Father watched him sawing a little, stopping to change the position of his hands on the saw frame, or stand on the other side of the saw, and not seeming to accomplish much. Father came along and asked him why it was taking him so long to get the wood sawed. "I'm tryin' to saw all ways."

Roy went hunting alone up on the lower part of Bessey Mountain one day and finally arrived home without his gun. He had noticed some spruce gum on the trees and thought this would be a good chance to collect some. So he set his gun down by a tree, got out his jackknife, and had a good time wandering among the trees to collect the amber nuggets. Thinking it was finally time to start home he searched for the gun without avail. I think that his friend Asa Howard went back with him the next day and helped him find it.

Crossing the wooden bridge and going up a small hill we find the Fred Howard home on our right. But before we look at the buildings we may notice the huge willow tree in their yard. I believe that the circumference of the trunk got to be 18 or

EDITOR'S CORNER

In the Winter 1984 issue of the *COURIER* is found a profile on a very special member of the Society. Marjorie MacArthur Noll died in 1985 and this autumn the Trustees voted to establish in her memory the Marjorie MacArthur Noll Volunteer Service Award. Funded through contributions from her family and friends, the award will each year honor an outstanding volunteer, who in the opinion of the Awards Committee and the Trustees, best exemplifies her tradition of service to the Society. The first presentation of this award will be made at the annual meeting in 1987.

SRH

more feet, the largest I have ever seen. The house is rather quaint and attractive, with the barn at a little distance along our road. The Howards had one son, Asa, who was approximately the age of Roy Lane. Fred was quite a rugged man, of medium build, and Asa was more slender and had a chuckling laugh and a prominent Adam's apple which moved up and down when talking or laughing. Fred and Asa used to work together a great deal, both on their small farm and cutting wood for others. We used to joke about Asa seeming to be the older of the two, with his thin body and rather stooped walk.

Asa became acquainted with a Massachusetts woman, who may have been vacationing nearby one summer. They were finally married and Helen came to live in the Howard family. She was a very heavy woman, and at the time of the marriage there were jokes about "the broom and the broomstick." Asa was joking with Roy Lane one day advising him that he should also go to Massachusetts and find a wife for himself. Roy drawled, "Bout that, guess I'll look around here a while first."

Father and I were, for some forgotten reason, calling on the Howards one day when Helen suggested that she play her piano for us. As she started a rollicking number Asa laughingly remarked, "It sounds to me like a hen cackling." There really was resemblance, I thought, and started laughing. It was reported that Helen said later that my laughing must have been because I had never heard a piano before.

Nearby, on the same side of our road, is a comparatively modest house occupied by Alvah Cummings, who, on occasion, used to work for Father by the day, probably for one dollar a day and dinner at noon. That was the "going" wage for farm hands in our neighborhood. The house changed occupants more often than most houses along the road, and I remember seeing a sign in the front window, "To let." Since the upright sash was between the two words I thought, as I walked by on the way to school, that it was one word — TOILET.

From here we can see the next house on the left side of the road. Fred Kilgore lives there with his wife and daughter, Irene. Fred was a rough and ready lumberman and small farmer. Irene was a pupil in the little country school just over the hill and we found her to be a kindly and unassuming schoolmate. The three were coming home from the village one day when Fred stopped the horse in the road in front of our house, came to our door, and said to mother, "My kid wants to give your kids some candy" and handed her a little paper bag. The event is remembered because mother would never allow us to call other children "kids", and comments were made on Mr. Kilgore's choice of words. To mother "kids" were only little goats and she didn't like to have children demeaned by that title.

Now up a steep little hill and immediately down a much longer one and equally as steep and we find a small school-house, woodshed and outside toilet immediately on our right. The hill is causing considerable diversion for the pupils because whenever a car attempts to go up the hill it has to back down, get a running start, and try again — perhaps more than once. Later the top of the hill was cut down considerably and the cars were perfected to the point where they could usually get up at the first try.

There were twelve students, the number varying a little from term to term; school hours were from 9 to 12 A.M. and from 1 to 4 P.M. The school was not divided by yearly grades, but into classes of those of similar ages and scholastic abilities, who were promoted from year to year to the next textbooks or to more detailed and difficult problems. Graduation from the school came when a pupil could pass an examination for entrance to Gould Academy. Reading and writing was basic,

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This appears to be a record year for the Society in regards to membership growth. To date we have a total membership of nearly 700 members, representing more than twenty five states and three Canadian provinces. If the current trend continues, we seem certain to more than exceed this year's goal of 700 members by the end of 1986.

Also making good progress so far this year is the annual endowment campaign. Over three hundred members and friends have contributed so far and I am hopeful this progress will continue so that the Society's future operations can be placed on an increasingly firm base. If you have not already done so, I urge you to make a contribution so that the 1986 goal can be reached.

Alden T. Kennett

and were carefully taught. Reading aloud each day was practiced, and the spelling of words repeated over and over. Writing was an art, and careful formation of the letters was done over and over again in the "writing book." Arithmetic problems of increasing difficulty were mastered and demonstrated on the blackboard panels on the wall to show one's skill and demonstrate for the other members of the class. There was some memorization of literary or poetic material, and occasionally a school program was arranged when parents and friends were invited and the pupils individually came to the platform and "spoke pieces" reciting the poems and dialogues they had memorized for the purpose. I can still remember some of the things that I committed to memory then, and they have enriched my life.

The teachers were local graduates of Gould Academy: my sister Minnie at one time and Mildred Brown who lived two houses further up the road. Among the other teachers that I can still remember were Millie Oliver from Middle Intervale, Mildred Hapgood from the Songo Pond Road and Addie Horr. Millie Oliver, a relative of my grandmother, Mary Oliver Wilson, boarded at my home for a time, as did Mildred Hapgood. We never had a man teacher during my approximately ten years of attendance there. Nor did we have a college or normal school graduate. Henry H. Hastings was the town's School Superintendent for much of the time that I attended school there, and he would occasionally visit the school and certain classes would be asked to recite for his benefit, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of the learning that was taking place.

Conversation or "whispering" was not allowed during school hours and whisperers were reprimanded and, on occasion, after repeated offenses, required to stand for a time in a front corner of the schoolroom. But a request could be granted by the teacher for two pupils to sit together at one desk to study together for a short period of time. If one needed to go out to the toilet, he could raise his hand with the first two fingers making a V and the teacher would give her permission. On one occasion Albert Skillings asked to go out three or four times at very short intervals and the teacher refused him. "All right," he said, "if you want me to bust my bladder." He was evidently trying to annoy the teacher and succeeding.

Now let's go on to the next house, which is on our left and a bit lower than the road. Elmer Stearns runs this place with his mother and younger brother, Arthur. They did a considerable amount of farming, lumbering and wood-cutting, and had a sugar orchard on the opposite side of the road. The men were well-built, strong men. I went into the house with Father one

(continued on page 4)

SOCIETY SALES DEPARTMENT

The Society maintains a selection of modestly priced gifts and historical publications. These may be ordered at the prices listed below. Maine residents should include 5% sales tax. Orders under \$10 should include \$1 for postage and handling; those over \$10 but under \$20 should include \$2 and all those over \$20 should include \$3 for postage and handling.

Moses Mason House Tile \$3.50
Stationery (package of ten sheets and ten envelopes)
\$2 each

Moses Mason House
Summer House
Bethel Railroad Station

Booklets

"Bethel's Broad Street" 75¢
"The Family Farm" 75¢
"Made in Bethel" 75¢
"Dr. Moses Mason and His House" \$1
"Molly Ockett" \$2

Maps and Atlases

1880 Map of Bethel Hill \$2
1880 Map of Entire Town (Bethel) \$2
1878 Bird's Eye View of Bethel Hill \$1
1858 Atlas of Oxford County \$6.50

Wood Tote (canvas) (Moses Mason Museum logo) \$12.50

Tote Bag (Moses Mason Museum logo) \$7.50

Placemats, 4 Season (set of four) \$7.50

Special Editions

Bethel Citizen (1974) \$1
Indian Raid '81 \$1

Books

William B. Lapham, HISTORY OF WOODSTOCK, MAINE \$19.95
Holt, GRAND TRUNK LINES OF NEW ENGLAND \$24.95
D. B. Wight, WILD RIVER WILDERNESS \$4
Francis Parkman, THE GOULD ACADEMY STORY \$7.50
Ruth Crosby, FROM AN OLD LEATHER TRUNK \$3.50
BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY COOKBOOK \$5
Thomas Hubka, BIG HOUSE, LITTLE HOUSE, BACK HOUSE
BARN: THE CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS OF NEW
ENGLAND Paper \$19.95. Cloth \$29.95
William B. Lapham, HISTORY OF NORWAY, MAINE \$55
Silas Maxim & Wm. B. Lapham, HISTORY OF PARIS, MAINE \$45
Jean Lipman, RUFUS PORTER REDISCOVERED \$12.95
A TRUTHFUL LIKENESS: CHESTER HARDING AND HIS
PORTRAITS \$25
Paula Wight, NEWRY PROFILES \$5
Eva Bean, EAST BETHEL ROAD \$50

William B. Lapham, HISTORY OF BETHEL, 1768-1890 \$45

T-Shirts

Moses Mason Museum (Adult) (S,M,L,XL) \$6
Moses Mason Museum (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14) \$5
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Adult) (S,M,L,XL) \$6
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14) \$5

Post Cards: Dr. Mason, Agnes Mason,

Moses Mason House 10¢ ea.

Bethel Historical Society Calendar, 1987 \$5

Members of the Bethel Historical Society are entitled to a 10% discount for purchases totaling \$10 or more. Please send orders to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217. They will be sent by return mail.

(Northwest Bethel Road, continued from page 3)

day when he called there on some errand. Mrs. Stearns looked me over quickly and commented in her rather loud voices, "My! Little runt, ain't he!"

Elmer bought an evaporator for making maple syrup and built a "Sugar house" in the maple orchard on the upper side of the road. It was like a huge pan, perhaps four by six feet with six-inch sides and some partitions in it so that the maple sap could run in at one end and after a period of time, with a hot fire underneath, would come out at the other end as syrup. He employed father to care for the evaporating process during one or more seasons, and I used to enjoy going up and watching. The sap was collected from the buckets which hung below the spouts (or spiles) on the "tapped" maples, put into a huge tank which was mounted on a lumbering sled, drawn by a pair of horses, and drawn to the sugar house. Here it was drained into another tank from which it could flow into the evaporator. It would take at least thirty gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup. It was my father's job to regulate the flow of sap into the evaporator, keep the wood fire hot underneath, test the liquid for "thickness" when it approached the outlet, and regulate the flow out when the syrup was sweet enough to weigh a certain amount per gallon. It was very interesting to me to watch the whole process, and occasionally I would get a bit of the delicious fresh syrup to eat.

One day while I was visiting there Rob Enman came to see the operation, and his black and white long-haired dog, probably a mongrel, came with him. It happened that Elmer Stearns' bull dog was also there with his master and he evidently didn't like to have his domain invaded by a foreigner, so a real dog-fight began. There was no good-natured fooling about it, and the masters, seeing that it was a fight to the death, grabbed some heavy wooden stakes and managed to separate them. A verbal difference of opinion ensued as to which dog was "getting the better" of the other, each owner loyally backing his own dog.

But to move on — the next house and barn, sitting on the north side of the road, is that of Frank Brown. The Browns had five children, Mildred, about my sister Minnie's age, Adelbert, Harry, about my age, Philip and Katherine. All five attended the nearby school (but not all at the same time) and, as I mentioned earlier, Mildred later taught there. Frank was one of the "Town Fathers," a respected and prominent man and at some time one of the town's Selectmen.

I remember that two of the boys, probably "Del" and Harry, came to visit me one day. Led on by them we got to walking the high beams in the barn and jumping in the hay mows. Some of the beams were really high, practically two stories above the barn floor, but we tried to out-do each other. I may have been the only one who was frightened by the height, and only later realized that we were endangering our own lives.

Down the hill beyond the Brown farm we come to Jack Eagle's modest farm home. There were at least two older daughters, but Ethel, about my age, is the only one I remember well. This is the house where Leston A. Wheeler, a second cousin of mine and an excellent botanist, spent the last lonely years of his life.

We are getting quite a distance from my home now, but would like us to look at a few more families. The next is that of Seth and Addie Mason. Seth did small farming and Addie, among other things, wrote news items and poetry for local newspapers. The daughters were Ruth, a few years older than I, and Claire, about my sister Myrtle's age.

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
FOR INDIVIDUAL FUNDS
DECEMBER 31, 1985

ASSETS	UNRESTRICTED FUNDS		RESTRICTED FUNDS	
	CURRENT	PROPERTIES	COLLECTIONS	ENDOWMENT
Cash in Banks	\$ 3,402	\$ 4,288	\$	\$ 111,067
Investments				255,480
Inventory at Cost	3,561			
Prepaid Insurance	1,624			
Properties and equipment at cost (Note 2)		372,549		
Less accumulated depreciation		138,716		
		233,833		
Land		5,000		
Collections Materials			13,495	
Total assets	<u>\$ 8,587</u>	<u>\$ 243,121</u>	<u>\$ 13,495</u>	<u>\$ 366,547</u>
<u>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES</u>				
Accounts Payable	\$ 600	\$	\$	\$
Accrued expenses payable	499			
Total liabilities	<u>1,099</u>			
Fund balances				
Undesignated	7,488			17,273
Restricted - General		243,121	13,495	35,139
- "Sidney's Fund"				304,136
Total Fund Balances	<u>7,488</u>	<u>243,121</u>	<u>13,495</u>	<u>356,548</u>
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	<u>\$ 8,587</u>	<u>\$ 243,121</u>	<u>\$ 13,495</u>	<u>\$ 356,548</u>

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

B. STURGES BUTLER
Public Accountant

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATEMENTS OF REVENUE, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
FOR INDIVIDUAL FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1985

	UNRESTRICTED FUNDS		RESTRICTED FUNDS	
	CURRENT	PROPERTIES	COLLECTIONS	ENDOWMENT
Revenues:				
General contributions (Note 3)	\$ 1,305	\$	\$	\$
Dues	3,023			
Admissions and sales income	3,562			
Rental Income	148			
Investment Income	39,596	223		3,855
Income from programs	2,247			
Grant Income	1,600			
Total Income	<u>51,481</u>	<u>223</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,855</u>
Expenses:				
Program exhibits	122			
Merchandise for resale	711			
Depreciation expense		10,240		
Salaries	15,100			
Heat, lights, water and sewer	4,982			
Janitorial services	78			
Supplies, office and postage	4,394			
Insurance	3,797			
Building Repairs	1,370			
Taxes	1,917			
Dues	305			
Professional Fees	900			
Bookkeeping Expense	1,200			
Telephone	453			
Miscellaneous expense	761			
Grant Expense	1,063			
Director's Expense	396			
Total Expenses	<u>37,549</u>	<u>10,240</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of revenues over expense	<u>13,932</u>	<u>(10,017)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,855</u>
Individual fund balance at beginning of year	<u>5,320</u>	<u>251,116</u>	<u>13,495</u>	<u>342,951</u>
Transfers between funds	<u>(11,764)</u>	<u>2,022</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,741</u>
Individual fund balances end of year	<u>\$ 7,488</u>	<u>\$ 243,122</u>	<u>\$ 13,495</u>	<u>\$ 356,547</u>

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

B. STURGES BUTLER
Public Accountant

B. Sturges Butler
PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

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Board of Trustees
Bethel Historical Society
Bethel, Maine 04217

We have examined the balance sheet of the Bethel Historical Society at December 31, 1985 and the statements of revenues and expenditures and changes in fund balances for the year then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and accordingly included such tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial position of the Bethel Historical Society at December 31, 1985 and the results of its operations for the year then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

B. Sturges Butler
B. Sturges Butler
Public Accountant

September 3, 1986

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 1985 and DECEMBER 31, 1984

	1985 Total All Funds	1984 Total All Funds
ASSETS		
Cash in Banks	\$ 118,757	\$ 109,766
Investments	245,480	240,262
Inventory at Cost	3,561	2,318
Prepaid Insurance	1,624	1,624
Properties and equipment at cost - net (Note 2)	233,834	242,052
Land	5,000	5,000
Collections material	13,495	13,495
Total Assets	\$ 621,751	\$ 614,517
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES		
Accounts Payable	\$ 600	\$ 1,053
Accrued expenses payable	499	582
Total Liabilities	1,099	1,635
Fund balances:		
Undesignated	24,761	18,215
Restricted - General	291,755	285,749
- "Sidney's Fund"	304,136	308,918
Total Fund Balances	620,652	612,882
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	\$ 621,751	\$ 614,517

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

B. Sturges Butler
PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1985 and DECEMBER 31, 1984

	1985 Total All Funds	1984 Total All Funds
Revenues:		
General contributions (Note 3)	\$ 1,305	\$ 360
Dues	3,023	2,901
Admissions and sales income	3,562	4,351
Rental Income	148	245
Investment Income	43,674	24,380
Income from Programs	2,247	13,974
Grant Income	1,600	7,500
Total Income	55,559	53,711
Expenses:		
Director's Expense	396	541
Merchandise for Resale	711	1,088
Program exhibits	122	-
Depreciation Expense	10,240	11,271
Salaries	15,100	13,871
Heat, lights, water and sewer	4,982	5,099
Janitorial services	78	78
Supplies, office and postage	4,394	5,468
Insurance	3,797	3,043
Building repairs	1,370	1,563
Taxes	1,917	1,384
Dues	305	356
Professional Fees	900	900
Bookkeeping expenses	1,200	1,200
Telephone	453	633
Miscellaneous expense	761	208
Grant Expense	1,063	7,500
Total Expenses	47,789	54,203
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	7,770	(492)
Fund balance at beginning of year	612,882	613,374
Fund balance end of year	\$ 620,652	\$ 612,882

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

B. Sturges Butler
PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
DECEMBER 31, 1985

Note 1 - Major accounting policies:

Inventories: Inventories are recorded at cost as there are no items being sold at less than the cost value.

Properties and depreciation:

Purchased properties are recorded at cost; donated properties are recorded at market value at the date of the gift. Maintenance and repairs are charged to the appropriate expense accounts in the year incurred; renewals and replacements are capitalized. Depreciation is computed using the straight line method at annual rates based upon estimated useful lives. The useful lives are 40 years for the building and 10 years on most of the equipment and furniture. Collection materials which are to be retained permanently are not depreciated.

Note 2 - Properties:

Major Properties classifications are as follows:

	BUILDING	BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS	EQUIPMENT AND FURNISHINGS	COLLECTIONS MATERIALS
December 31, 1984	\$278,621	\$ 57,509	\$ 34,398	\$ 13,495
Additions	-	-	-	-
December 31, 1985	\$278,621	\$ 57,509	\$ 34,398	\$ 13,495

Depreciation charges were as follows:

Building	\$ 6,966
Building Improvements	2,145
Equipment & Furnishings	1,129
	<u>10,240</u>

B. Sturges Butler
PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT



Society member Merton Brown assists with the awarding of prizes for the annual Children's Parade during Sudbury Canada Days, August 9-10. Here his daughter, Phoebe receives a trophy for her costume selected for first prize in the "Judge's Choice" category. Other events during the two days included a flower show, historical film series, art show, children's games, craft demonstrations and exhibits, horseshoe and croquet tournaments, log driver's bean supper, old time variety show, and an old fashioned church service.

Then, nearby is the Bennett home, with Clarence, "Cad", an older son, and Gard, only a little older than I. Gard used to enjoy annoying me and I guess I was rather easily annoyed. The Bennetts for years used to deliver milk daily to customers in the village.

Then, still on the right of the road, is Ed Mason's home and little machine shop. I think that he did metal work, but was not, as I remember him, a farrier. I do not remember Mrs. Mason, but used to know his son Glen. Father used to go there for certain repairs to farm tools etc., and on one occasion when he was having a bad toothache one night, Father hitched up a horse, drove the mile and a half to Ed Mason's and had the tooth pulled.

Next is another Mason home, but I have no clear memories of that. But just beyond the road that turns left to the ferry is the Len Sumner home. Liliias, a daughter, was a bit younger than I and so was in school with me for a long time. She was a pretty, demure and friendly girl and we all liked her. She visited my sister Myrtle in our home on a few occasions.

Now, as we return to my home along the road, we are reminded that all the houses except the Stearns and Kilgore residences are on the north side of the road, away from the river. Many of the fields for cultivation are between the river and the road, in the fertile meadows. And the erection of houses on the "uphill" side of the road was appropriate in view of the possibility of seasonal flooding.

And now, welcome back to my home. It is still more HOME to me than any other place in the world. The twenty years that I spent here were the happiest and, I feel sure, the most important years of my life. I go back to them often to refresh my spirit and glean again from them the lessons that they instilled.

1986 ANNUAL MEETING

The 21st annual meeting of the Society was held on September 4 with the traditional pot luck supper supervised by the Special Projects Committee preceding it.

During the business portion of the meeting, president Alden Kennett presented some of the highlights of the past year since the last annual meeting. These included the showing of "From Stump to Ship", a documentary on lumbering in the 1930s, at the October meeting which attracted over 500 persons; the exhibit "A Good Stand of Buildings" in the meeting room during the fall and winter of 1985-86 and the conference held in Bethel which was inspired by Thomas Hubka's award winning book, BIG HOUSE, LITTLE HOUSE, BACK HOUSE, BARN: THE CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS OF NEW ENGLAND and attracted persons from throughout the Northeast; a highly successful Endowment Campaign; the addition of over 100 new members; the donation of photographs, books and artifacts from some fifty individuals; the publication of Eva Bean's EAST BETHEL ROAD; the production of a new Society brochure; the publication of a second impression of the 1981 reprint of William B. Lapham's HISTORY OF BETHEL; very successful special events (Homecoming, Heritage Day, Faye Taylor Memorial Art Show, Dr. Moses Mason Birthday Party - 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Society, Sudbury Canada Days). President Kennett thanked everyone for making this record of achievement possible.

Retiring trustee Persis Post delivered the report of the Nominating Committee (Norris Brown, Joy Yarnell and Persis Post): President, Alden T. Kennett; Vice-President, Marvin Ouwinga; Secretary and Clerk of the Trustees, Charles F. Raymond; Treasurer, Mary C. Keniston; Trustees for three years, Edward H. Hastings and Lynda Chandler. President Kennett expressed the Society's appreciation to Mrs. Post and Ruth Wight, retiring trustees, for their fine service on the Board.

Board of Trustees Chairman Margaret Joy Tibbetts presented several honorary membership certificates to eight members who have for many years contributed significantly to the Society. This is the organization's highest honor and members designated for this category by the Trustees must be at least 75 years of age with long records of service. Named as Honorary Members were Maxine Brown, Ralph S. Hall, Ranald and Sarah Stevens, Edmond and Sudie Vachon, Persis Post and Edna M. York.

BOOK REVIEW

PRESERVING NEW ENGLAND by Jane Holtz Kay with Pauline Chase-Harrell. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986. 214 pages, paper, \$17.95.

A landmark of major importance, *PRESERVING NEW ENGLAND* defines the status of the preservation movement in this region of the nation and gives a history of New Englanders' search for place and identity. Well-illustrated with black and white photographs, the work may be the best one-volume publication on its subject currently available.

Jane Holtz Kay, whose successful book, *LOST BOSTON*, was published in 1980, carries the reader through numerous examples of efforts to create a "sense of stewardship," one which combines the demands of the new with a sensitivity for the old. From the preservation of individual buildings, such as Boston's Old South Meeting House, Ipswich's Whipple House, and Portland's Wadsworth-Longfellow House, to the creation of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities in 1910, Kay highlights efforts throughout the region to protect

(continued on page 6)

(Book review, continued from page 7)

the historic fabric for future generations. In separate sections of the book, Kay treats the preservation of whole villages, towns, and cities, as well as the still-bountiful green spaces that give New England so much of its historic character. The book concludes with a "Regional Source Guide" to preservation organizations, and an extensive bibliography of materials for the preservationist.

The appearance of this book is timely, in that Bethel (and, indeed, much of its surrounding territory) is presently in flux, with rapid development presenting a challenge to the historic environment. With resources such as this book at hand, local planners, preservationists, and concerned citizens have a unique opportunity to examine the successes (and failures) of preservation/conservation efforts throughout the region. Those alarmed by the potential loss of Bethel's small-town atmosphere might do well to examine the case of Harrisville, New Hampshire, which has avoided "ruining the town by saving it" through careful and well-controlled promotion. This book, in presenting such lessons, aims to address the multitude of preservation issues which we all now face.

Randall H. Bennett

Randall H. Bennett, Society Curator of Collections, is the author of the forthcoming book OXFORD COUNTY, MAINE: A GUIDE TO ITS HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE.

OUR READERS WRITE

Margaret Hanscom Humphrey, class of 1926, Gould Academy, writes:

"One of my very happy memories of Gould Academy is playing basketball in the 'old gym' which was actually the attic of the Academy building. There were posts from floor to ceiling which were hazardous and were kept padded to avoid injury. Mother and Dad were both much interested in basketball —and Mother always carried her muff to use as a face guard as she sat on the sidelines, practically in the court. She did get her glasses knocked off a time or two but nothing daunted, she kept watching the game. I am sure Dad never missed a game and doubt that Mother did — even with a big family to care for. Those were certainly 'the good old days.' "

From Society member Martha Long, 9 Depot Road, Kingston, NH 03848 the following poem has been received:

EVASIVE JACOB

I searched the records through and through
From the years of 1781 to 1802.
That Jacob eludes me from one page to another
How could he have kept so undercover?
Where could he have been before
Coming to Bethel Maine?
On no paper, a father or mother does he claim.
He bought no land on which to make a stand.
He made no will for his family to fulfill.
He joined no group in which I could snoop.
Was never called into court, didn't do what he ought not.
Was not in the military as far as I know
I wish there was record to show.

Who was he?

He must have been a rover, he married Sally Grover.
Then in a year or more passed on to another shore.
His son's name Otis may be my only clue
To Jacob's father, I wish I knew.

I remember my grandmother with long red curls
Spotted with freckles and having teeth like pearls.
Was she the image of Jacob Dalrymple
Who hasn't made my searching simple?
If I have missed some obvious place
A hidden fact I need to trace
Any suggestion you have please remit
I will return the favor for your benefit.

MEMBER PROFILE

Corinne A. Twitchell

September 6, 1899 - September 13, 1986

Corinne A. Twitchell was born in Portland, the daughter of Austin F. and Sarah O'Donnell Twitchell. She attended Portland schools and was a graduate of Gray's Business College. For many years she was employed as a legal secretary. She retired several years ago and at the time of her death was a member of the Portland Club, Westbrook Library Guild, Daughters of the American Revolution, Founders and Patriots Society and the Huguenot Society of America. She died in Portland on September 13, 1986 and is buried in Forest City Cemetery in South Portland. A life member of the Bethel Historical Society, she bequeathed to the Society a fund that will bear the name of her Bethel-born father and be specifically reserved for collections purposes.

SOCIETY BEGINS GENEALOGICAL FILE

To assist the Society's staff in answering genealogical queries and in referring requests for genealogical information from the many who write each year, a genealogical surname file of family names being researched has been inaugurated. Based on increased use of the Society's growing genealogical resources, this file will also include the names of those currently working on or interested in a particular surname. In the future, the staff will continue to conduct limited research on a no-fee basis, in addition to mailing the address(es) of those researching the same lines. Anyone interested in this new service should mail surnames along with their address to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.



FIFTY YEARS AGO — In the photo above looking west from Bethel Hill are the waters of the 1936 flood, which brought some of the highest levels of flooding on record and resulted in considerable property damage.

IN MEMORIAM

Died in August 1986, H. Hills Skillings, Amherst, MA, contributing member.

Died in Portland, September 13, 1986, Corinne A. Twitchell, life member and generous donor.

Died in South Paris, October 7, 1986, Gertie F. Bartlett, life member and at age 99 the Society's oldest member.

Died in South Paris, November 30, 1986, Kimball Ames, life member and generous donor. At the time of his death, Mr. Ames, age 95, was the Society's most senior member.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Donald S. and Arlene G. Brown, Bethel, are retired. He is currently serving as a society trustee and she has long been active in a number of capacities.

Lee F. and Judith A. Carroll, Gorham, NH, are a consulting engineer and nurse respectively.

Lawrence D. Kimball, Jr., Newburyport, MA, is an osteopathic physician and a 1948 graduate of Gould Academy.

Jeffrey D. Mills, Bethel, was re-elected to the Maine House of Representatives in November.

Roy Silver, Bethel, is a teacher at Telstar Regional High School.

Dewey and Verna Thayer, Mason, are retired. He is a former town manager of St. George and she is a native of Mason, a town named in 1843 for Dr. Moses Mason.

NEW TRUSTEES

Lynda H. Chandler

Lynda H. Chandler is a native of Mercersburg, PA and a graduate of George School and Goucher College. She married Stephen Chandler in 1954 and is the mother of three sons. Moving to Bethel in 1970 when her husband assumed a position of mathematics teacher at Gould Academy, she has been active in the community ever since, currently serving as a trustee of the Bethel Area Health Center. She has also been a volunteer in the Society's craft program. An assistant director of admissions at Gould, she includes among her hobbies tennis, golf, and gardening.

Edward H. Hastings

Edward H. (Ned) Hastings was born in Dorchester, MA in 1923 and educated in the Boston public schools. A graduate of Wesleyan and Harvard Universities, he taught at the Erskine School in Boston, Clark University and Curry College before his retirement this year as Dean of the College at Curry, which also awarded him an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. In addition to his work as a teacher of English literature, he has been a church music director for the past 45 years. His publications include ten church anthems and four organ compositions. Long active in the Bethel Historical Society, he also has been a generous donor. He moved to Bethel this summer to reside in the Broad Street house built in the 1820s by his great grandfather John Hastings.

DUES STRUCTURE REVISED

At the December 4 monthly meeting of the Society, a new dues structure was approved by the membership. Previous to this, the proposal had been reviewed by the Long-Range Planning and Membership committees and by the Board of Trustees. The basic membership (sustaining) will be \$5 (those members 55 years of age and over \$3) which will become effective on January 1, 1987. Contributing membership will be \$15, patron \$30 and two new categories, benefactor (\$40) and corporate or business (\$50) have also been added. An individual preference category (any amount over \$5) has also been established. Life membership levels will remain the same as in the past. The Society's dues structure had not been revised since 1971 and one of the recommendations of the Long-Range Planning Committee was to bring it more in line with other comparable organizations.

SOCIETY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

Alden T. Kennett, President; Marvin Ouwinga, Vice-President; Charles F. Raymond, Secretary and Clerk of the Trustees; Mary C. Keniston, Treasurer; Trustees, Donald G. Bennett, Donald S. Brown, Lynda H. Chandler, Edward H. Hastings, Margaret Joy Tibbetts.

Join the Bethel Historical Society dedicated to preserving and interpreting the local past.

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) free admission to the museum | (5) quarterly newsletter |
| (2) special discounts at museum store | (6) reduced course fees |
| (3) preferred rate for meeting room rental | (7) voting rights in the Society |
| (4) special library and archival privileges | (8) special invitations to Society occasions |

(Please Print)

Name

Address

Signature

Please check appropriate category and send your remittance to: Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217 (effective Jan. 1, 1987)

----- Sustaining (Individual) \$5

----- Contributing \$15

----- Patron \$30

----- Students (under 18 years) \$2

----- Senior (over 55 years) \$3

----- Corporate \$50

----- Life over 55 years \$50.00 single

----- Life over 55 years \$75.00 couple

----- Life under 55 years \$100.00 single

----- Life under 55 years \$150.00 couple

----- Individual preference (any amount over \$5)

OXFORD COUNTY ARCHITECTURAL BOOK DUE IN EARLY 1987

A book on Oxford County's architectural heritage by Society Curator of Collections Randall H. Bennett is expected to make its appearance early in 1987. The final product of the Oxford County Historic Resource Survey, this publication was funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, which approved the funds to the Society. Titled



1986 is the centenary of the birth of Rt. Hon. Clarence Decatur Howe (1886-1960) shown above (center with white shirt) with his family at his grandfather's farm in East Bethel in the 1890s. Mr. Howe would later serve in the cabinets of two Canadian Prime Ministers from 1935 to 1957 and become a major figure in the history of modern Canada. From left to right (front row) are Agnes Hastings Howe (1859-1930), John Hastings Howe (1891-1943), John Decatur Hastings (1825-1904), C.D. Howe, Emma Kimball Hastings (1834-1896), Agnes Howe Bettinger (1889-1978), Mary Hastings Howe (1855-1918), back row, Mary Fifiel Hastings (1877-1926) and George Kimball Hastings (1863-1944).

The Bethel Historical Society
P.O. Box 12
Bethel, Maine 04217

Published quarterly by the Bethel Historical Society, Stanley R. Howe, Editor. Please address all inquiries and suggestions to Editor, Bethel Historical Society Publications, Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.

ISSN 0749-9108

OXFORD COUNTY, MAINE: A GUIDE TO ITS HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE, the book focuses on the most significant buildings in the county from modest timber-framed 18th century houses to imposing Beaux Arts commercial structures. It contains over 1000 entries and 400 photographs and should go far in identifying those economic, social, political and cultural factors that have given Oxford County its historic character. This volume also will include a brief historical overview of 42 towns, plantations and townships in the county, as well as a selective bibliography dealing with Oxford County history, the first of its kind to be published. The publication of this volume, which has been a project of several years, will assist the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in identifying properties suitable for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and aid the general reader in gaining a deeper appreciation and understanding of the county's historic resources.

SOCIETY RECEIVES BEQUEST

Under the terms of a trust established by the late Corinne Twitchell of Portland, a life member of the Society, a bequest has been received to be named for Miss Twitchell's father, Austin F. Twitchell, who was born in Bethel in 1845. Mr. Twitchell served in several battles in the Civil War, participated in the reconstruction effort in the Carolinas, and learned the shoemakers trade from his father. For many years he practiced his trade on Exchange Street in Portland, dying there in 1910. He was the father of eight children. The Austin F. Twitchell Memorial Fund has been established and only the interest from this fund will be used for collections purposes.

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